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Voting Practices of US Aid Recipients in the United Nations

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A Reference Aid

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GI 86-10076
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Information available as of January 1986 was used in this paper.

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Voting Practices of US Aid Recipients in the United Nations

Summary

The voting practices of the 108 US aid recipients at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) indicate an extensive lack of support for the United States. Only 22 of the recipients vote with the United States with relative frequency; all of the others vote infrequently with the United States. Among the 22 countries that receive the most aid, only six often vote with the United States. Some nations receiving little aid vote more frequently with the United States than many of the larger recipients.

This Reference Aid illustrates the voting record of US aid recipients at the UNGA by:

- Categorizing the voting patterns of aid recipients in 1985.
- Comparing 1985 voting with fiscal year 1985 aid levels.
- Highlighting voting trends of several aid recipients from 1983 to 1985.

Fragmentation and Lack of Support

The voting pattern of aid recipients in 1985, as depicted in the map, shows a wide disparity in support for the United States. Countries are divided into four categories:

- Those that voted with the United States relatively frequently—on at least 30 percent of the 472 recorded votes.
- Those in agreement on 20 to 29 percent of such votes.
- Those whose vote correlated with the United States position on only 10 to 19 percent of recorded votes.
- Those that voted with the United States on fewer than 10 percent of the votes.

Relatively low percentage categories are used because voting support from the majority of aid recipients is below 30 percent.

Most aid recipients do not vote often with the United States in the UNGA. Slightly more than one-half of the recipients voted with the United States on no more than 10 to 19 percent of the rollcall votes in 1985. Most of these states are members of the Nonaligned Movement and avoid a visible voting association with the United States. Another one-fourth of the aid recipients, including eight African, 12 Latin American, and six Pacific countries, usually register votes supporting in the 20- to 29-percent range. Although they receive US aid, Algeria, Benin, Ethiopia, India, Mozambique, and the Yemen Arab Republic have the lowest voting records—below 10 percent. Israel, some West European allies, seven Latin American delegations, and the Solomon Islands have the strongest voting records—in the 30 percent or more category—among US aid recipients.

The support record is somewhat better for the top 10 resolutions the United States considered especially important at the 1985 UNGA session. Of the 22 members that receive the most aid, 15 voted with the United States at least 50 percent of the time on these resolutions. Israel voted with the United States on 10 of the 10; Egypt, on five of the 10. Nearly half of all the aid recipients—particularly Bangladesh, Indonesia, Jordan, Somalia, and Sudan, all of which receive high levels of US aid—voted with the United States on less than 50 percent of the top 10 resolutions. Seven delegates, including those of India and Ethiopia, did not vote with the United States on any of the top 10; many delegates abstained or were absent when these votes were taken.

Low Voting Records

Several recipients of substantial aid stand out for their low voting records in 1985. Egypt, for example, received nearly $2.5 billion in grants and loans but voted with the United States on only 15.3 percent of the recorded votes. Egypt usually voted with the Arab and African Blocs. Pakistan, to which the United States provided $665 million in aid, has a voting record similar to Egypt's. Pakistan usually votes with Arab Bloc.

India, which received $191 million in aid, and Ethiopia, which received $87 million, mostly in food aid, also are noteworthy as major aid recipients with extremely low voting records, 8.9 percent and 9.3 percent respectively. India is a leader of the Nonaligned Movement; Ethiopia, a Soviet client. Ironically, some of the recipients at the low end of the aid spectrum—those that received $1 million or less—such as the Solomon Islands or St. Christopher and Nevis, voted with the United States more frequently, 50 percent of the time.

Maverick States

Although most aid recipients follow the trend of the UN membership as a whole—with a decline in support for the United States from 1983 to 1984 and a partial recovery in 1984 and 1985—several stand apart from the others either because of a steady increase or because of a steady decline in support for the United States over the last three years. As indicated in the graphic, Spain, St. Christopher and Nevis, Greece, Colombia, and Mauritius steadily increased their support for the United States in the UNGA. By contrast, Guatemala, Western Samoa, Morocco, Panama, Sri Lanka, and Comoros have steadily lessened their support. These trends do not appear to be correlated with aid levels because some recipients receive substantial aid while others receive little.

Some Explanations

The mismatch between aid and voting is attributable to several factors:

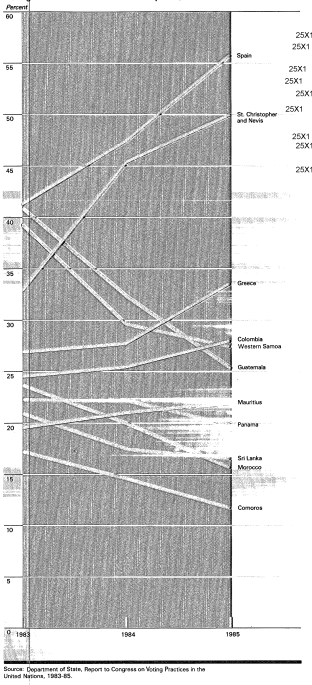
- Bloc voting. Most aid recipients vote in regional blocs at the United Nations. For example, the United States provided aid to 62 of the 50 Nonaligned Movement (NAM) countries, which voted with the United States on as much as 30 percent of the rollcall votes. This kind of performance is caused by what one UN delegate refers to as the "imperative of solidarity."
- Concentration of the aid program. Twenty-two aid recipients in the United Nations received 63 percent of global US aid in FY 1985. Most of the remaining 86 recipients received less than $50 million each; 18 got less than $1 million each. As such low levels, we believe that aid most likely was not a factor in these countries' voting and that the United States has little leverage with them.
- Bilateral relations. Because US aid packages are designed primarily to serve US bilateral and regional interests, recipients, until recently, have assumed that they had no obligation to vote with the United States in the UNGA.

US Aid Programs

US foreign assistance programs include the following:

- Economic assistance in the form of grants and loans
- Emergency relief
- Food for Peace;
- Aid to voluntary relief agencies
- Inter-American Development Bank loans
- Peace Corps programs
- Military Assistance Program grants
- Foreign Military Credits financing
- International Military Education and Training Program
- Export-Import Bank loans
- Short-term credits by the Commodity Credit Corporation
- Overseas Private Investment Corporation direct loans.

Voting Trends of Selected US Aid Recipients, 1983-85

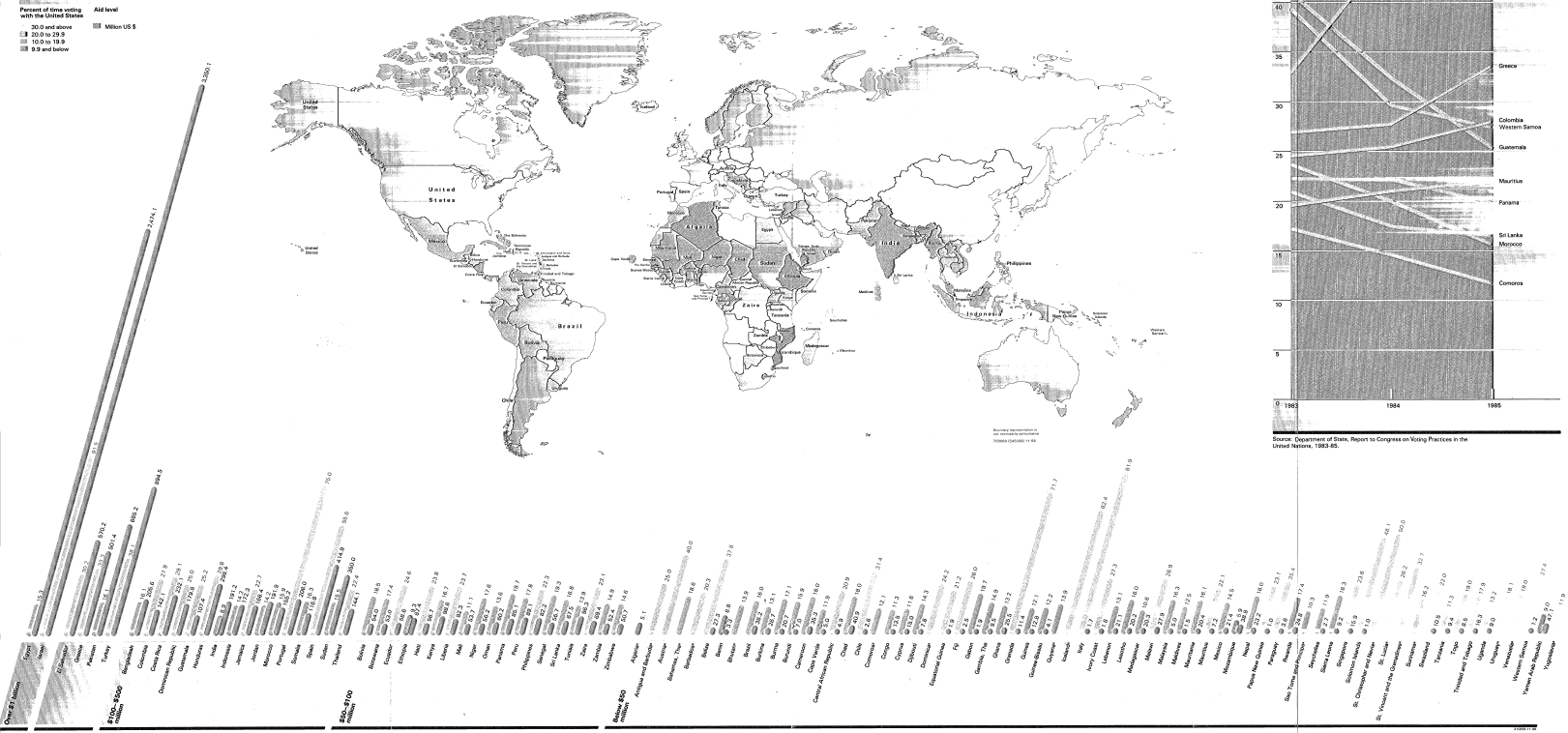


Source: Department of State, Report to Congress on Voting Practices in the United Nations, 1983-85.

US Aid Recipients: Aid Levels and UN Voting Record, 1985

Percent of time voting with the United States
- 30.0 and above
- 20.0 to 29.9
- 10.0 to 19.9
- 9.9 and below

Aid level
- Million US $



Source: Agency for International Development, US Overseas Loans and Grants, 1945-85.
Less than $1 million in aid.

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